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ADMINISTRATION OF NATIONAL SECURITY

BASIC ISSUES

A STUDY

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY
STAFFING AND OPERATIONS

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FOREWORD

Free men are engaged in a bitter contest with powerful and resourceful foes. At stake is the safety of the Nation and the future of individual liberty. The challenge is mortal and the tests ahead will be exacting. The machinery of our Government must therefore be a help and not a hindrance to both policymaking and action.

In May 1962 the Senate established the Subcommittee on National Security Staffing and Operations to review the administration of national security at home and in the field, and to make findings and recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

The subcommittee is a successor to the Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery. In the 2 years since that subcommittee submitted its first reports, a new administration has taken office. It has made important organizational changes and important changes in national security policy. The two may not be unrelated. But difficult problems of administration remain, and may hamper prompt and effective action.

The present subcommittee is concerned with the administration of national security—with getting good people into key foreign and defense posts and enabling them to do a job. It is not inquiring into the substance of policy.

The subcommittee's approach to its task is nonpartisan and professional. The executive branch has extended its cooperation.

During the first stage of its study, the subcommittee has sought the views of present and former officials of the Government, eminent military leaders, and distinguished students of the national security process. Its staff has prepared several background studies on the problem of the inquiry, and has taken a firsthand look at staffing and operations of U.S. missions and military establishments in Asia and Europe.

This initial staff report examines a number of the central issues before the subcommittee. During the present Congress, the subcommittee plans to hold hearings covering the main subjects discussed in this report.

HENRY M. JACKSON,
Chairman, Subcommittee on
National Security Staffing
and Operations.

JANUARY 18, 1963.

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ADMINISTRATION OF NATIONAL SECURITY

BASIC ISSUES

I. The President's Problem

> The other point is something that President Eisenhower said to me on January 19, 1961. He said, "There are no easy matters that will ever come to you as President. If they are easy, they will be settled at a lower level." So that the matters that come to you as President are always the difficult matters, and matters that carry with them large implications.
>
> President John F. Kennedy, telecast interview, December 17, 1962

By law and practice the President is the chief maker of national security policy. He conducts foreign affairs. He is Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. He makes the crucial decisions on the budget he submits to Congress. He is the Nation's Chief Executive, responsible under the Constitution for taking care that the laws are faithfully executed. As such, he supervises the departments and agencies. Although he is not in any simple sense their manager—for their responsibilities run not only to him but also to Congress—he is the only coordinator our constitutional system provides.

The new complexities of national security make the task of a President more difficult today than ever before.

The boundary between foreign and domestic policy has almost been erased. Foreign policy, military policy, and economic policy are now intimately linked. The United States has relations with over 100 countries, mutual defense treaties with over 40, and participates in scores of regional and international organizations. Policy must be made and executed in the context of fast-moving and world-shaking events—the deadly contest with, and perhaps within, the Communist world, the building of new structures in the free world, the emergence into statehood of new nations with great expectations and greater problems, and advancing technologies that may upset the balances of power.

A President must look to the national security departments and agencies for help in initiating and carrying out national policy. The Departments of State and Defense, the military services, and related agencies at home and in the field are for the most part staffed with experienced, capable, and dedicated people. They are a vast storehouse of information, historical perspective, skills, and resources.

But these assets are not automatically available to a President. He must know how to put them to work in planning and executing national security operations—how to make them serve his needs while they carry on the important tasks that cannot receive his attention. The art of administration is to staff and organize for this purpose.

The very size of the national security organization is one of the problems. It is too big for any one man to know all about it. It is so big that unusual astuteness and knowledge are required to draw on it.

Congress, of course, influences national policy and sets limits within which a President can act. It creates departments and agencies; it authorizes programs; it influences the size and composition of the Armed Forces and the nature of aid and information and related policies; it appropriates funds for the conduct of national security policies; the laws it passes affect the Government's ability to hire and hold good people; its attitudes reflect the American people's understanding of national security problems and their willingness to support national security programs.

On the whole, the United States has adjusted quickly to the shifting demands of a world in change. But the process of adjustment has only begun and success is not assured. Many emotionally charged areas must be realistically examined and calmly appraised.

If the Nation is to pass the tests that lie ahead, the Presidency and State and Defense and the other national security agencies must handle their jobs with new excellence. And Congress, too.

II. Dilemmas of Administration

> * * * it is at this point that we run headfirst into the system of "checks and balances" as it applies to the executive departments.
>
> * * * This is really a method of requiring power to be shared—even though responsibility may not be and of introducing rival claimants from another department with a different mission into the policymaking or decision-taking process.
>
> This is the "foulup factor" in our methods * * *
>
> Whether or not this itch to get in the act is a form of status seeking, the idea seems to have got around that just because some decision may affect your activities, you automatically have a right to take part in making it * * * there is some reason to feel that the doctrine may be getting out of hand and that what was designed to act as a policeman may, in fact, become a jailor.
>
> Robert A. Lovett, Statement before the Senate Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery, February 23, 1960

Argument between conflicting interests and views is healthy—indeed indispensable—if kept within reasonable bounds. But it may be carried too far and create what Robert Lovett has called the "foulup factor."

A continuing Presidential dilemma is whom to listen to, and how much, before he moves.

One can appreciate a President's desire to let advisers have their say, and to hear as much as possible before committing himself. Yet it may be best to err on the side of small groups of responsible officers and to avoid large free-for-all sessions which are as likely to confuse as to clarify the choices he faces.

The President and the National Security Organization

The needs of a President and the needs of the departments and agencies are not identical—and herein lies a source of administrative difficulties and misunderstanding.

What does a President need to do his job?

Essentially he wants to keep control of the situation—to get early warning of items for his agenda before his options are foreclosed, to

pick his issues and lift these out of normal channels, to obtain priority attention from key officials on the issues he pulls to his desk, to get prompt support for his initiatives, and to keep other matters on a smooth course, with his lines of information open, so that he can intervene if a need arises.

As top officials meet the President's urgent requirements, their other duties necessarily receive lower priority. Their regular meetings are canceled. They become less accessible to their subordinates. Ad hoc procedures are devised. Much is done verbally that would normally be put in writing. This all becomes exceedingly hard on subordinate officials, for it interferes with their handling of the usual run of business.

What do the officials of our vast departments and agencies need to do their job?

Essentially they want orderly, deliberate, familiar procedures—accustomed forums in which to air their interests, a top-level umpire to blow the whistle when the time has come to end debate, and written records of the decisions by which they should be governed.

It is no secret that the abolition of the Operations Coordinating Board came as a disappointment to many at the middle levels of government, who found in it a way of getting within hailing distance of the center of power. Vocal status seeking is one of the curses of government and increases the "foulup factor." But middle-level yearnings for some equivalent of the OCB involve more than status only. They have their origin in the desire to have one's views heard through some set, certain, reliable procedure which binds the highest levels as well as other agencies.

It is worth recalling that the National Security Council was chiefly the inspiration of James Forrestal, who wanted to enhance the defense role in peacetime policymaking and especially to insure regular consultation by future Presidents with their principal civilian and military advisers. The purpose was at least as much to make the Presidency serve the needs of the departments as to make the latter serve the former.

It is not surprising that the departments often find a President's way of doing business unsettling—or that Presidents sometimes view the departments almost as adversaries.

A continuing dilemma, demanding a subtle appreciation on all sides of the needs of a President and the departments, is how to manage the Government so that Presidential business is transacted to his satisfaction, and so that the normal run of business, also vital to the national interest, can be transacted in a fashion suited to the needs of large scale organization.

Decision at the Center and Delegation

A President can make only the smallest fraction of the total number of decisions relating to national security. His are the guiding or directional decisions, but millions of supporting operational decisions, and associated actions, must be taken by men in the long lines radiating from the White House through the headquarters of the national security agencies to officers in posts throughout the Nation and the world.

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Delegation is therefore not merely desirable; it is unavoidable. It is the way an organization gets the day's work done.

Clearly, however, there are powerful forces which push and pull issues to the President's desk and make decentralization difficult.

First, Washington is the center of power and the center has a strong magnetic attraction, especially in a period remarkable for its ease of travel and communication. Because issues can be referred to Washington by radio, cable, and airmail, they are. Because embassy officials can travel to Washington and Washington officials can travel to the field, they do. Foreigners are also attracted, and visits to Washington by heads of state, prime ministers, foreign ministers, and others are increasingly popular. The visitors tend to bring issues with them for decision—because they want to take home some good news.

Second, issues seldom present themselves nowadays as one-department or one-country problems. But Washington is organized into departments and the field into country missions and this pushes decision-making and operations coordination toward the White House. Only the President stands above all departments and agencies and only he and his principal lieutenants can see the problems of a country or a region in the perspective of national policy as a whole.

Third, history records a number of instances in which delegated authority was used unwisely, sometimes with serious consequences.

Fourth, the higher that issues are pulled for decision, the greater the chance that the pressure of special interests can be resisted, that irrelevant considerations will be screened out, and that material considerations will be properly weighed.

Fifth, and perhaps most important, in a period when war or peace may hinge on the way in which a quarantine of Cuba is handled, there is a strong tendency for a President to exert control from the center, because of the risks of leaving delicate matters to subordinates. It scarcely is an accident that one characteristic of the second Cuban crisis, perhaps in response to lessons learned from the first, was tight, detailed control from the Cabinet room over a host of subordinate operations.

Yet delegation of the right issues with appropriate guidance to able subordinates is of critical importance. The Nation's security depends not only on a President's skill in handling crises and major issues but also on the steady and competent handling of less vital matters by the department chiefs and the national security organization as a whole.

Without successful delegation, problems will pile up on the President's desk and the talents of key officials in Washington and the field will be underemployed. More important, too much of a President's time and energy will be dissipated on matters of less than first priority.

The key to delegation is a clear and reasoned basic policy line authoritatively stated to department and agency heads—and defining as part of the decision itself the priority the policy is to receive. Understanding, more than command, is the secret of successful teamwork.

In our system, two men have the chief responsibility for providing this guidance—the President and his first adviser, the Secretary of State. And to get the job done, the relation of the President and the Secretary of State has to be close, marked by solid mutual respect.

But even with ideal relations between these two, the objective of clear and reasoned policy guidance will be hard to reach and hold. For the nature of concrete policy issues and the character of governmental action processes push for a pragmatic one-thing-at-a-time-on-its-own-terms approach.

Planning and Action

A President is concerned with fires and firefighting, and as with fire chiefs everywhere, firefighting has to have priority.

In many ways it is easier, though more nerve racking, to fight fires than to take steps to prevent them. The Government functions best under pressure. When the alarm bell rings, its ponderous machinery begins to move. A task force can be assembled and used to mobilize the resources of the departments and agencies for the job at hand.

But planning in order to stop trouble before it starts is more difficult, in part because it is hard for top officers to give it their attention and in part because of confusion about the nature and purpose of planning. It is not an ivory tower activity, which can be carried on, as some have proposed, far from the hurly-burly of Washington, although it may draw on the ideas of men working at the frontiers of knowledge.

Planning is critically dependent on the unplannable flashes of insight which are usually sparked by worrying and wrestling with actual problems.

The European Recovery Program was not dreamed up on a campus, though it was announced on one. It was the product of the interplay of minds between Marshall, Lovett, Clayton, Acheson, and President Truman, who saw what was happening in Europe and were searching for ways to reverse the trend of events.

The object of planning is not to blueprint future actions—although there may be a limited utility in so-called contingency planning, or thinking of the "what-would-we-do-if" variety.

The object is to decide what should be done now in light of the best present estimate of how the future will look. Planners think about the future in order to act wisely in the present.

Seen in this way, every action is explicitly or implicitly the fruit of planning. One move is chosen in preference to another because its anticipated consequences are preferred. The distinction between the planner and the operator has been overdrawn. If there is one, it is less in the time span with which each is concerned than with the narrowness or breadth of their perspectives. The Air Force or the Navy or the Army looks to the future when it advises on weapons systems, but its perspective is narrower, more nearly that of a special pleader, than the perspective of the President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense when they, also looking ahead, consider one weapons system in relation to a total defense system and the latter in turn as one component of a total strategy for the defense and advancement of national interests.

It is because of the need for wide perspectives and for fitting the part into the whole that a President and his key advisers have essential roles to play in long-term planning. But this activity competes for their time—on unfavorable terms—with planning and action to meet the crises of the day. Who could concentrate on Laos and Cambodia in relation to South Vietnam, or on the Common Market

in relation to NATO, when Cuba threatened to engulf the world in flames?

A continuing administrative problem, which every administration has had to face and none has wholly solved, is how to fit what might be called trouble-avoidance planning into days crowded with crisis-coping plans and operations. There has been a tendency to think that the first could be entrusted to planning councils or boards of one kind or another or perhaps even to "think groups"—and such organizations may make useful contributions. But not the whole contribution, for in the final analysis, a top executive must do his own planning. Otherwise, he will not be truly committed in his own mind to plans that may bear his signature.

One is reminded that the National Security Council study known as NSC 68 was little more than a paper plan until it was ratified in the President's mind by the movement of North Korean troops across the 38th parallel.

III. The President, the Secretary of State, and the Problem of Coordination

> President Kennedy "has made it very clear that he does not want a large separate organization between him and his Secretary of State. Neither does he wish any question to arise as to the clear authority and responsibility of the Secretary of State, not only in his own Department, and not only in such large-scale related areas as foreign aid and information policy, but also as the agent of coordination in all our major policies toward other nations."
>
> McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, letter to Senator Henry M. Jackson, September 4, 1961

The Office of the Presidency is the only place in which departmental lines of decision and action converge. As a result a President can rarely look to one man or one department for advice and assistance on any major matter and must act as his own Secretary for National Security Affairs. But he cannot do the job alone.

In this fact lies the problem of coordinating national security policy and operations. The budgetary process offers the President unique assistance in controlling the size and composition of the armed services and the size and nature of aid and related programs, and in assigning priorities in the use of resources. But the budgetary process is of little relevance to the day-to-day coordination of national security operations. The President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs can help to keep the President informed about matters that may require his attention and see that he is staffed on issues that he takes into his own hands. With the help of his Office, therefore, the President can coordinate policy and operations—to the extent that he can take command. But when, considering the wise use of his time, he cannot perform the coordinating role or chooses not to do it, who can? The answer is that no one can but someone must.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S COORDINATING ROLE

A key question is the proper role of the Secretary of State.

Subject to a President's direction, his Secretary of State is charged with responsibility for overseeing the conduct of all aspects of the Nation's relations with other states. In this broad area his interests, though not his authority, are coextensive with the President's.

The Secretary is the President's principal adviser with respect to economic and military aid, cultural and information programs, and policies for the reduction and control of arms, as well as diplomacy, and the President's agent for coordinating all these elements of foreign policy.

But he is not the President's principal adviser on defense policy, and it is the skillful merger of defense and foreign policies that one has particularly in mind when speaking of national security policy.

Yet if planning and operations are to be coordinated, they must be coordinated by someone. And someone is a singular word.

The logical choice for this well-nigh impossible task is the Secretary of State. Of the Cabinet, only a Secretary of State is primarily charged with looking at the Nation as a whole in relation to the world. The nature of his post leads him, more than any other Cabinet officer, to have a perspective closely approximating the President's.

But to have a fighting chance of success, a Secretary will have to command unusual confidence and support of a President. Indeed, the attitude of a President toward his Secretary of State can determine whether he will be a great Secretary. When a President is close to him, confides in him, and relies on him, the Secretary has a chance. A President will have to be reluctant to intervene in those matters he has put into his Secretary's hands, for if another Cabinet officer can frequently obtain Presidential satisfaction when he is disappointed, the Secretary will not be able to do the job a President needs done.

By the same token, a Secretary must be willing to assert his own position and exercise his proper influence across the whole front of national security matters, as they relate to foreign policy. He should also, of course, be quick to refer matters to the President when his decision is needed.

All this depends therefore on a special relationship of trust and easy understanding between a President and his Secretary of State. Given this, a Secretary will seldom have difficulty in working with a Secretary of Defense and will be able to assist his chief in coordinating plans and operations for national security.

A question of importance is whether the Department of State, and particularly the Office of the Secretary, is staffed and organized to support the Secretary in exercising this responsibility. A complicating factor is that the responsibilities of the Secretary are wider than those of his Department.

One hears a good deal these days about organizing the Secretary's office around action-forcing processes. Much of the talk, however, centers on analogies that are not necessarily apt.

The foreign affairs budget, for example, does not provide the same leverage for the coordination of foreign policies that the defense budget provides the Secretary of Defense. Although a Comptroller for Foreign Affairs would therefore not be able to serve the Secretary of State

as the Comptroller of Defense serves the Secretary of Defense, the possibility of using budgetary control as a coordinating device might well be studied.

Some have drawn an analogy to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. But although the Secretary of State, the Administrator of AID, the Director of USIA, and the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency might coordinate foreign policies as the JCS coordinates military policies, they could not integrate defense and foreign policies.

What are the action-forcing processes that might be more effectively employed? Two suggest themselves: the preparation of recommendations for the President on national security policies and the sending of instructions to U.S. missions and military commanders overseas.

In the early days of the National Security Council the Secretary of State acted as chairman whenever the President did not take the chair, and was responsible for preparing recommendations to the President. One proposal is that this arrangement might be reestablished—and applied also in any Executive Committee of the NSC.

Another proposal relates directly to the coordination of defense and foreign policy. It is that better means should be found to insure that instructions to U.S. missions and military commanders overseas are consistent, are issued in such a way as to have the authority of the President behind them, and are known to, and binding upon, all departments and agencies concerned. This might call for a review of all outgoing messages by an appropriate staff.

A third proposal is that the Secretary of State should play the key role in the management of interagency task forces which are not led by the President himself, and that his office should be staffed to handle their management.

The Interagency Task Force

The present administration has made much use of the interagency task force as a device for the day-to-day handling of complex and critical operations.

The Berlin task force is an interagency group whose members have major responsibilities in their departments for the kinds of operations which might be used to meet the crisis. It is chaired by State (originally by Defense) and reports to the President through the Secretary of State. It is concerned with ongoing planning and operations for the maintenance of the Western position in Berlin, including the coordination of American policy and action with the major European allies and with NATO.

The Counterinsurgency task force is chaired by State (originally by the President's military representative) and reports to the President through the Secretary of State. It is concerned with planning and operations to prepare the United States for intensified warfare where conventional military forces and operations are not the full answer.

Recently the Executive Committee of the NSC, with the President himself in active command of planning and operations, was in effect a task force for the Cuban crisis.

An interagency task force is therefore an interdepartmental coordinating committee. It is a flexible device, participation in which can be adjusted to the needs of the situation. It may bring together the highest officers of the Government or officers at the second or third

level in the departments involved. For the time being they give overriding or even exclusive priority to the task at hand.

At the same time, every improvisation, such as the creation of a Berlin task force or an executive committee of the NSC, is an acknowledgment that existing ways of doing business have proved inadequate, and that the President has had to spend time devising ad hoc methods of making and executing policy.

The task force differs from the usual interdepartmental committee in that it has a specific, limited job of great interest to the President and goes out of active existence when the job is done, is action-oriented, and puts a strong chairman—in some cases the President himself—over strong members who can get things done in their departments.

Superficially the interagency task force seems to provide the answer to the problem of coordination, at least for critical issues. But the experience—touched on here—has been mixed. Some have been successful; others have been disappointing. The record is extensive enough so that it should be possible to find out why one works but not another.

It may be worth asking how a task force can be prevented from becoming just another interdepartmental committee, with a production of paper inversely proportional to its influence. Is one requirement that there be strong Presidential interest in its work? Should a place at the table go only to responsible officers of departments and agencies which have genuine authority and responsibility for executive operations? Should the task force chairman be an Assistant Secretary of State or higher ranking officer who enjoys the confident trust of the Secretary of State and the President and has access to them? At what point does the membership of a task force grow too large?

Also, it is worth asking what would have happened if the Executive Committee of the NSC had had to maintain the pace of the Cuban crisis for 2 or 3 more weeks, with other important issues piling up, and a whole new system of Executive Committee subcommittees beginning to blanket the executive branch.

It would be folly to conceive a government in which every interagency task was assigned to a special force. On the other hand, a satisfactory scheme of organization will surely provide something like task forces to deal with certain problems that do not fit tidily within departmental jurisdictions.

IV. The Ambassador and the Country Team

In regard to your personal authority and responsibility, I shall count on you to oversee and coordinate all the activities of the United States Government in .

You are in charge of the entire U.S. Diplomatic Mission, and I shall expect you to supervise all of its operations. The Mission includes not only the personnel of the Department of State and the Foreign Service, but also the representatives of all other U.S. agencies which have programs or activities in .

* * * As you know, the U.S. Diplomatic Mission includes service attachés, military assistance advisory groups, and other military components attached to the Mission. It does not, however, include U.S. military forces operating in the field where such forces are under the

> command of a U.S. area military commander. The line of authority to these forces runs from me, to the Secretary of Defense, to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington and to the area commander in the field.
>
> Although this means that the Chief of the American Diplomatic Mission is not in the line of military command, nevertheless, as Chief of Mission, you should work closely with the appropriate area military commander to assure the full exchange of information. If it is your opinion that activities by the U.S. military forces may adversely affect our overall relations with the people or government of , you should promptly discuss the matter with the military commander and, if necessary, request a decision by higher authority.
>
> President John F. Kennedy, letter to American Ambassadors, May 29, 1961

In the postwar years the United States greatly expanded its overseas operations. Alongside the old diplomatic missions large, semi-independent organizations for economic and military aid and cultural and information programs grew up. Labor, Agriculture and other agencies sent representatives abroad. American military bases and installations, with sizable American forces, were established in many countries. Many of these organizations and representatives had their own lines of reporting to Washington and had statutory authority and responsibilities defined by Congress.

The volume and variety of American business with foreign countries dramatically increased. The texts of international agreements between the United States and foreign governments concluded in the 12 years between 1950 and 1962 fill 30 large volumes occupying 7 feet of shelf space! Many of these agreements dealt with highly technical matters and had to be negotiated with the help of experts from Washington.

All of these developments placed the authority and prestige of the ambassador in doubt and put great strains on the old diplomatic machinery. In 1951 President Truman took steps to support the ambassador's primacy. The concept of the country team, with the ambassador at its head, was initiated. Further steps in this direction were taken by President Eisenhower. President Kennedy's letter of May 29, 1961, is the most recent attempt to confirm the ambassador's leading position.

But in the field, as in Washington, the task of coordination has grown more complex as the instruments of national policy have multiplied. The major elements of the modern diplomatic mission are State, AID, USIS, the service attachés (Army, Navy, and Air Force), military assistance advisory groups (MAAGS), and CIA. Often there is also an area military commander.

Although all members of the country team acknowledge the ambassador's position, respect his precedence as chief of mission, tell him about their work, show him their cables, and invite his comments, their dependence on him and their desire to be coordinated by him differ greatly. As a general rule, their readiness to accept his right of decision varies with the degree to which they are involved in operational matters, such as the conduct of aid programs, and have their own reporting lines to Washington.

The political counselors and other old-line members of the diplomatic staff are most dependent on the ambassador and have the greatest interest in supporting him. They have no line of reporting except through the ambassador—and informal letters to colleagues

in Washington. At the other end of the spectrum is the MAAG. Its work is highly operational, it has its own lines to the Pentagon, and it tends to take a restricted view of the ambassador's right to interpose himself between it and the Pentagon on budgetary, programing, and operational decisions. The other groups fall somewhere between these positions. CIA is closer to the MAAG model, while USIS falls closer to the diplomatic model and AID somewhere in the middle.

Country team processes have, therefore, quite different meanings for the several participants, seeming almost a waste of time to those heavily involved in day-to-day operations. The fact that deadlines and other decision-spurring pressures seldom hit the participants at the same time contributes to the unevenness of interest in the work of the country team. What is usually involved is action by one group at a time on a matter of great moment to it and of little immediate interest to the others. In the eyes of, say, a MAAG chief preparing his budget, the other members seem at best to be little more than spectators and at worst a threat. On particular issues, however, the ambassador's support may be helpful and this strengthens his position. But in general each group of operators would be happy to be left alone by the others.

To a degree the primacy of the ambassador is a polite fiction, especially where budgetary and programing decisions are concerned. Most elements of the country team do not, in other words, regard themselves as parts of the ambassador's staff—rather they look outside the country, to intermediate headquarters or Washington, for guidance and support and their loyalties tend to run in the same direction. Nevertheless, it is apparent that a strong ambassador can pull a team together and exert great influence.

Some suggest that an ambassador should have responsibility for preparing a complete country program and for reviewing and approving all parts of it, so that the final program would be his and so that he would be put by the nature of the process in the role of umpire and adjudicator of competing claims for resources. Because of the way agency programs are prepared in Washington, however, this would present great difficulties. A consequence is that decisions on military and economic aid and other programs are pulled toward the Presidential level in Washington and that the competition for resources tends to run between overall appropriations for military versus economic aid, and so forth, rather than between the need for military aid in comparison with economic aid in a particular country.

Despite these observations the field is refreshingly free of interagency strife. In general the deep jurisdictional clashes evident in Washington are absent. Divisions are present but are watered down, partly, no doubt, because the team acquires a certain solidarity by virtue of common experiences in dealing with the local government, on the one hand, and with Washington, on the other.

One of an ambassador's problems is that the country team is an interdepartmental organization which has no corresponding organization to which it is responsible or to which it can look for guidance, direction, and support. In Washington the decision-making process is, so to speak, vertical—up departmental lines which converge only at the Presidential level. In the field, coordination is horizontal, with differences being resolved and policies harmonized by the ambassador.

The Planning Function in the Field

Ideally, one would suppose, the country team should be the chief source of country plans. It is on the spot and should be familiar with the obstacles to the accomplishment of U.S. objectives. Yet with few exceptions little planning is in fact done in the field and what is done is patchy.

The operational groups are so deeply involved in day-to-day operations that they have little time for planning, even if they have officers with the training and experience for the planning task. And they seldom do. There is, furthermore, no stated requirement for a coordinated country plan or program, in which economic and military aid, cultural and information programs, and other elements of American policy are drawn together and focused on U.S. objectives. There is no place in the embassy where this task could now be done.

Among the best people in the field are some of the political and economic counselors and their staffs. But the reporting content of their jobs and the burden of representation and negotiation is so great that they have little time for thinking about what the United States is trying to accomplish in the country and what combination of activities would best serve American purposes.

Increasingly, the United States is seeking to accomplish its goals through regional programs and international organizations, but it has not yet taken adequate steps to relate country missions to regional planning.

As things stand in the field, apart from exceptional cases, Washington cannot rely on the country team for planning. Yet satisfactory arrangements for preparing coordinated country and regional plans are still to be devised in Washington also. This is one of the major problems of staffing and organizing for national security. Whether efforts should be made to staff the missions for planning, or whether country and regional planning groups should be organized in Washington, or whether some combination of the two should be found are questions that demand attention.

The Reporting Function

Reporting occupies a very large part of a mission's time and energies. The volume of messages between Washington and the field has reached almost astronomical proportions. The daily volume of telegraphic traffic alone between State and the embassies is more than 300,000 words! Much is necessary but much is of doubtful usefulness.

Despite the volume of reporting Washington often feels and is poorly informed. The reason is largely that the decision-making process is not well enough understood so that headquarters can identify a need until it arises. Reporting requirements are therefore not clear. No one knows how to issue general instructions on who should be told what and when. As a result the rule seems to be: Report Everything. The field tries to cover every base and to anticipate every requirement in the hope that any information Washington may need will be available when wanted. The resulting flood of information swamps Washington's absorptive capacities.

This reporting is of very uneven quality. Some is brilliant, but the top executives seldom have time to look at it. Most is routine. But all of it must be read by someone -a fact which accounts for a great

deal of employment in Washington. Some of this talent could, one is confident, be employed in more useful ways.

Moreover the whole personnel system encourages reporting. Young officers get credit for writing reports, especially voluntary reports on matters outside their assigned responsibilities. An officer's reports are an important basis for evaluating his performance and recommending promotions. This may be sound personnel practice but it burdens the system with too much reporting and encourages wrong ideas about the proper allocation of time between direct observation and study of a country's problems and report writing.

Good reporting is essentially operational, directly serving the needs of men who must make decisions and direct operations. Much reporting at present is remotely related, if at all, to the decision-action process. Top executives are so heavily occupied that they have virtually no time for reading anything not immediately relevant to the day's problems.

Many countries are deeply involved in far-reaching political, economic, social, and military programs. The United States is assisting these programs of modernization and reform in many ways. Analysis of great depth and sophistication is needed as a basis for planning. What strains are these programs putting on the political system? Can they be carried without political collapse? What groups are gaining power and influence and which are losing? What political adjustments would strengthen the system? Are they feasible? How can the United States assist the process of adjustment?

The kind of knowledge and understanding needed to produce answers to such questions is not likely to be gained at a desk, reading second-hand accounts of what is happening in a society. Direct observation and study and a wide acquaintance in many social groups are needed.

But in addition the analyst needs to know his audience and its requirements. Scholarly analyses of great brilliance will be of little use unless they point to operationally significant conclusions. The definition of reporting requirements depends therefore on a clear location of responsibility for policy planning, and close contact between the analyst and the planner.

The reporting function should be carefully reviewed. Some suggest that reporting relevant to day-to-day decisions should be provided on a day-to-day basis in response to requests from the ambassador or Washington. The feasibility of this suggestion depends on the technical adequacy of the Government's communications system, and especially on the disciplined restraint of both the senders and the receivers of messages. Without such restraint, even the best communications system will soon be overloaded.

Some suggest that the kind of analysis needed for planning and programing should be a joint undertaking of teams consisting of members from Washington and the field and linked closely to the planning and programing process. This would require more frequent travel between Washington and the field, but might cost less and produce better results than present practices.

Whatever changes are made, intensive efforts are needed to develop officers who can produce the kind of political and economic analyses that are basic to the radically new nature of American foreign policy. There are now very few officers who have shown an ability to make "depth analyses" of the forces at work in society.

PERSONNEL FOR THE COUNTRY TEAM

Every mission has some first-rate people. But the number of big jobs is far larger than the number of able people available to fill them. With over 100 missions to be staffed—more than double the number only a few years ago—every personnel system has been strained. Every Washington headquarters is evidently robbing Peter to pay Paul, trying to cover the most critical spots by shifting its best people around. There is no prospect that recruiting will overcome the deficiency of good people in the near future.

It is therefore all the more important that good people be well used. But under present practices each department and agency must staff its own overseas posts. All too often the result is that an ambassador cannot use his best people in his most important spots. He needs freedom with respect to his own mission to move his good people where they are most needed.

Obviously, however, this runs headlong into existing practice. Personnel systems are organized by departments and agencies. Promotions, assignments, career development programs, organizational loyalties—all work against it. Whether the conflicting needs of the ambassador and of the career services can be reconciled is a serious dilemma of personnel administration.

THE DIVISION OF LABOR

The personnel problem is intensified by the problem of the division of labor between Washington and the field.

There is little doubt that the abilities of most missions are underemployed. The country team is familiar with local issues and problems—from important questions of policy to minor details of mission housekeeping. Many matters could be handled locally, with action being reported to, but not cleared with, Washington. Ironically, "Washington clearance" often means that a junior officer in Washington is second-guessing a senior officer in the field—and second-guessing him on matters the latter is better qualified to decide than an equally experienced officer in Washington.

Some progress has recently been made in delegating authority to the field for administrative decisions on such matters as housing, travel, and hospitalization. This shift is desirable and should be encouraged.

No similar trend is evident in policy matters. In fact, the contrary is true. More and more issues are being referred to Washington, or handled by officers sent from Washington, or settled in Washington in negotiations with visiting foreign officials.

Washington can of course assert its authority in any matter. But it should not assert it in every matter. There is a need to re-examine the division of labor between the two.

A proposal worth consideration is that issues might be left to the ambassador unless they are of such sensitivity, complexity, or importance that they demand attention of an Assistant Secretary or officer of higher rank. That is, an ambassador might indicate to Washington that he intends to act in a certain way by a certain date unless otherwise instructed. And Washington might exercise greater self-restraint in issuing instructions—with the philosophy that it may

be better to act a little less than perfectly rather than employ the time of Washington officials in a search for perfection. Some may even doubt that the sun always shines more brightly in Washington than in the field.

A shift of greater action-responsibility to the field by such rules of thumb might lead to important economies. Too much time is spent in Washington on matters that could be left to the mission, thus double-teaming talent when there is not enough talent to go around. This tendency shows itself in the habit of Washington and the field to "live on the cables"—to keep each other busy debating points on which it might have been better to let the mission act by itself under its general instructions.

Obviously there are no iron rules for dividing responsibility. What seems to be called for is more respect in Washington for the judgment of ambassadors and more restraint in second-guessing them.

Military Advice

Today's ambassador frequently has to make decisions and give his views on military questions.

Every mission has three service attachés. Many have a MAAG chief. A few must work with an area military commander. To which of these should an ambassador turn for military advice?

A reorganization of the military advisory function seems to be needed. The number of military representatives reporting directly to the ambassador is too large—a fact which tends to reduce rather than increase their influence in the mission. Partly in order to deal with these representatives and with an area military commander, if any, a new politico-military post has been established in many missions. This officer, usually a career foreign service officer with some special training, assists the ambassador with the coordination of political and military activities. In some cases he serves as the executive secretary of the country team.

A suggestion meriting serious consideration is that a single defense attaché might be designated by the Department of Defense, with such assistants as necessary from the three services. Presumably the defense attaché would be an officer of the U.S. military service that was also the most important service in the country—an Army officer in countries where the Army is the principal military organization, and so forth.

Another proposal is that the functions of the MAAG chief and of the attachés might be combined in a single officer, who might be called the defense attaché. The objection that the military aid program should be clearly separate from the normal attaché functions needs to be reexamined. The combination has been successful in some places.

Where there is an area commander of U.S. forces, the possibility of placing the MAAG under the joint supervision of the ambassador and the commander might be considered. In any event, where there is such a commander, an ambassador tends to rely primarily on him for military advice.

Regional Organizations

There are now four American Ambassadors in Paris: the Ambassadors to France, NATO, OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), and DAC (Development Assistance

Committee). This is the extreme case. But it illustrates the growing importance of regional organizations in the conduct of American policy.

The task of an ambassador to an international organization is more confining and limited than is generally understood.

He is, of course, constantly involved in promoting or opposing particular actions by the organization which may have an important bearing on U.S. national security policies. But if he is not to commit the United States to positions inconsistent with our national security requirements, he must remain closely tied to Washington. The President and the Secretary of State require information and advice from him. But he is dependent on them not only to set policy lines but also to give him his major assistance in carrying out those policies. He can expect to get results when the United States, working with its allies through bilateral discussions or in other small groups, has developed a position which can command support in the organization.

At the present stage international organizations are more decision-ratifiers than decision-makers. Things go well in NATO, or the United Nations, for example, when the United States and other key countries have reached a common position.

The growth of international organizations is one of the powerful forces pulling decision-making into Washington. Rational, effective negotiation on complex and critical matters, like a multilateral NATO nuclear deterrent or the reduction and control of armaments, requires unified guidance and instruction to those conducting the negotiations. This is a basic principle of sound administration and avoids the dangers of crossed lines.

The unified source of instructions can only be the President himself (not others in the White House or the Executive Office), or the Secretary of State, acting for the President, or, in appropriate cases, an Assistant Secretary of State acting for the Secretary. In this connection, the post of Assistant Secretary of State has achieved a new importance in the policy process.

Certainly U.S. missions to regional and other international organizations should not, and cannot successfully, operate as little foreign offices. Such confusion of responsibility reinforces a tendency to give undue weight in policy formulation to considerations that necessarily seem more important in Paris or New York, for example, than they seem to the President.

The Government has not yet fully faced the problem of adjusting its organization and procedures to the problems created by the growth of international organizations, particularly the United Nations and the regional organizations in Europe and Latin America. This is one of those emotionally charged areas that needs careful study.

V. Executive Responsibility for Administration

The actual conduct of foreign negotiations, the preparatory plans of finance, the application and disbursement of the public moneys in conformity to the general appropriations of the legislature, the arrangement of the army and navy, the direction of the operations of war,—these, and other matters of a like nature, constitute what seems to be most properly understood by the administration of government. The.

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> persons, therefore, to whose immediate management these different matters are committed, ought to be considered as the assistants or deputies of the chief magistrate, and on this account, they ought to derive their offices from his appointment, at least from his nomination, and ought to be subject to his superintendence.
>
> The Federalist No. 72, March 21, 1788

The view that what is called "administration" is separate, subordinate, and of little relevance to national security policy needs correction. The problem was understood by the writers of The Federalist papers 175 years ago. They correctly linked administration in the large sense—big "A" administration—with the selection and superintendence of assistants—little "a" administration.

The making of policy and its execution are aspects of a continuous process, and responsibility for both needs to be lodged in the same hands.

The best laid plans have to be modified as time passes. Circumstances change in unforeseen and unforeseeable ways. Unanticipated opportunities arise and unexpected obstacles appear, compelling adjustments of staff and operations and sometimes fundamental revisions of policy.

Top executives are strongly tempted to give administrative problems low priority. They have enormously heavy demands on their time. They know that they will be in office a relatively short time and that, except for a few key appointments, they will have to work mainly with the staffs they have. Many suspect, furthermore, that the payoff from efforts to improve administration is likely to be small, especially in the short run.

For this reason, problems of "administration" have been left largely to administrative officers. In the process even the word "administration" has seemed to shrink.

When one speaks of "the Administration," one thinks of the President and the direction of the Nation's affairs. But when one speaks of "administration," one thinks of accounting, payrolls, transportation of persons and things, career development programs, personnel management, and so forth.

The Government has had a great deal of experience with the delegation of responsibility for administration to officers outside the mainstreams of their departments. The experience confirms the wisdom of the Founding Fathers.

Environment of Excellence

It is easy enough to draw up a list of the qualities desired in public officials: judgment, drive, imagination, courage, intelligence, decisiveness, loyalty. If a President is to recruit such persons, he must provide scope for the exercise of these qualities. People possessing them can, after all, make a success in any career they choose and are not likely to remain in posts where they cannot put their abilities to work.

Good staffing is thus related to good organization. Perhaps the biggest task facing an administration is to create an organizational environment attractive to excellence. The challenge and the opportunity to perform at the limit of one's capabilities on tasks vital to one's country is the greatest reward government can offer.

MANAGEMENT FLEXIBILITY

An important question about any administrative system is whether the qualities which enable an individual to survive and advance in the organization are the same as those which will enable the organization to survive in a competitive environment.

The spirit of an organization is, then, of first importance. Whom do able and ambitious junior officers seek to emulate? Are do-ers rewarded? Or do cautious men—the do-littles—win advancement? It may be largely through imitation of the successful that recognizable types develop in organizations.

One of a top executive's most important jobs is to reward good—and penalize unsatisfactory—performance. The quality of his decisions in a few cases may tone up an entire organization and make it an effective instrument for his use.

But we have made it extraordinarily difficult for Government executives to take such action. In the laudable effort to avoid favoritism and assure fair and uniform treatment, the administrative scales have been weighted in favor of protecting mediocrity.

Perhaps it would be wise in the national security area to give top executives authority, within defined limits, to hire, promote, and reassign a certain number of people without the restraints and restrictions of the civil, foreign, and military service regulations.

It is ironic that the present Administration is busily searching for outstanding people in their early forties to serve as ambassadors, chiefs of foreign aid missions, and so forth, when there are many able and experienced men in the civil and foreign services who are probably better qualified for these jobs than most outsiders.

As things stand, however, these men will not be promoted to the highest classes in their services for many years. One of the dilemmas of administration is how to advance people rapidly and out of turn without disrupting the organization. The key is to act without fear or favor in rewarding excellence. And in pruning out incompetence.

No organization is overstaffed with good people. But everyone agrees that overstaffing exists in Washington and the field, with its well-known vices: excessive layering, unnecessary clearances, overgrown committees, needless proliferation of paperwork, and time-wasting demands on top officials.

Nevertheless, overstaffing remains, like the weather, a common subject of conversation but an infrequent object of action. And for much the same reason: the top executive despairs, under the restrictions to which he is subject, of doing much about it.

Some say that veterans' preference legislation and other regulations make it difficult to carry out reductions in force without disrupting an organization, largely because they trigger a chain "bumping" reaction. Others believe that these difficulties are exaggerated and used as an excuse to avoid the always painful task of reducing staff.

Some say that the Government has not taken intelligent advantage of the opportunities provided by the normal turnover of 10 to 20 percent through retirements, resignations, transfers, and death. If new recruiting could be held to half this loss, substantial reductions would be quickly possible. But the key is again authority for man-

agers to manage. Top executives need greater freedom to reassign people, abolish and consolidate functions, and perhaps to replace several low-ranking officers with an outstanding person or two of high rank.

This is an area in which cooperation between the executive branch and Congress might yield important results.

A change of attitude is needed at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. Too often officials of the executive branch regard Congress as an opponent; they are less than frank about their administrative problems when frankness would pay off; they try to minimize trouble by pretending that matters are well in hand when they are not.

For its part Congress should concern itself less with efforts to prevent executives from abusing power by restricting their ability to manage and should instead give them the authority to act as executives and hold them accountable for their use of it. There should be less emphasis on restrictions, restraints, and regulations and more on management flexibility with rewards for accomplishment.

VI. Communications

> This [Cuban] experience underlined also the importance in times of crisis of extremely rapid and reliable communications between governments. Rapid communication was instrumental in this case in averting a possible war. But even more rapid communication would in fact be desirable.
>
> Secretary of State Dean Rusk, address, Foreign Policy Association, November 20, 1962

The problem of fast, reliable, secure communication with our missions overseas and with other governments is at last receiving top-level attention, largely as a result of the serious inadequacies revealed in the course of the Cuban and Congo crises. The military and intelligence services have good, modern facilities for communicating with many key areas. Even their communications are poor, however, with many parts of the world, including most of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. The Department of State's facilities are unsatisfactory in most areas. Serious delays have been experienced and unfortunate restrictions on traffic had to be imposed in recent months, even in communications with major capitals of Western Europe.

Modern technology has made rapid, adequate, secure communication feasible. But the U.S. Government has not yet made full use of this technology to build a satisfactory worldwide communications system. Although the facilities required will be expensive, the cost will be minimal in comparison with the costs of a failure of communications at a critical juncture and in comparison with our expenditures on other parts of our national security programs.

A question of importance is whether a system can be planned and built which would meet Government-wide needs without costly duplication of facilities and without subordinating the needs and legitimate

interests of one department or agency to those of another. Congress, as well as the executive branch, should give this matter its priority attention.

The basic consideration is clear: there is every good reason why the U.S. Government should have the best communications facilities that modern technology can provide. It cannot afford less.

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